

SB 4 Support for a Rent Cap - Example of Decreased Health & Safety Despite an Exorbitant Rent Increase - Middletown, CT Page 1 (Barnaby)

1. After UpRealty purchased the Stonegate Apartments in Middletown, significant health and safety issues developed at the 1160 Building at Stonegate Apartments. There was **repeated loss of heat and / or hot water** throughout the 1160 building. I submitted work orders to UpRealty through their online ticket service. I have a copy of one particular **work order that UpRealty never responded to**. This was despite my multiple updates through their online ticket service over several days to advise that the loss of heat / hot water were not resolved. With no response from UpRealty, **I made several written complaints to the City of Middletown whenever the loss of heat / hot water occurred. I was particularly concerned because my chronically ill 76 year old mother was suffering physically and emotionally. This unconscionable lack of care for resident's health and safety made my mother's final days more tragic.** My mother used a wheelchair. I tried to find an accessible hotel room for her and could not find any in the area. We had to use space heaters and heavy blankets to keep my mother warm. We had to boil water to make warm water to bathe my mother. How does this happen in the 21st Century?
2. In mid 2022, UpRealty cashed my rent payment but stated that they had not received it. I provided detailed financial information from my bank. The bank manager also signed a letter stating that the payment was cashed by UpRealty. I was told that I had not provided satisfactory evidence of my payment followed by UpRealty staff refusal to credit my account with the rent payment. This situation continued for more than 3 months. **They actually had a staff member bang on my door to harass me to pay the "missing" payment and threatened eviction. After I hired a lawyer UpRealty quickly found that my rent payment was applied to my mother's account. My mother had been deceased since 12/8/2021 and there was another family living in her former unit. UpRealty could not explain why my mother, a deceased person's, account was still active.**
3. Once UpRealty purchased the Stonegate property many residents of the 1160 Building quickly moved out leaving only 3 apartments occupied on my wing of the building. This is in addition to long-term residents of the 1150 building who were "forced out" by untenable rent increases.
4. After the building purchase, **UpRealty asked me to document my income to determine whether I could afford the increased rent prior to renewing my lease (approximately 6 months after I should have been offered a new lease). They asked for income documentation the following year as well.**

5. Since UpRealty purchased the Stonegate property **my rent has increased by \$300 (27%) followed by significant decreases in health and safety and increased harassment by UpRealty staff:**
 1. **Lack of heat / hot water requiring several reports to the City of Middletown due to non-response from UpRealty.**
 2. **Being required to meet financial tests annually.**
 3. **Lost rent payment followed by threats of eviction.**
 4. **The entrance door of the 1160 building remains open all day.**
Numerous times I observed the door still open as late as 10 p.m. I closed the door anytime I observed it open at night. I observed the door to the handicap entrance open late at night as well.
 5. **There is no functional lock on the main door of 1160. This door has has been unlocked for at least a year. This is a significant safety issue at Stonegate.** Apparently, the lock was broken and UpRealty decided not to replace the lock.
 6. Since the lock was not repaired, **anyone can walk into the building. They have access to the apartments and residents. It is no longer clear which people are residents and which are not.**
 7. There have been **thefts of items in locked storage units.** Residents stated that their locks had been broken by the responsible person(s).
 8. **I've had at least 3 packages stolen.** I received pictures of the packages indicating proof of delivery and the location of where each package was left by UPS. The items were not there when I went to retrieve them a few hours after receiving the notice of delivery. **I filed a police report.** The most recent theft of two of my packages occurred on 2/20/23.
 9. Several residents shared with me that they also had packages stolen.
 10. In the parking lot, on 12/25/22, **I and another female resident were accosted by an unknown male. I filed a police report.** We need cameras and better lighting in the parking lots and walkways.
 11. Finally, there is a labeled Panic Button in the basement laundry room which appeared to provide some sense of security when one is alone in the laundry room. **I recently asked the local office staff person where the Panic Button rang when pressed. The staff person told me that she was unaware that there was a Panic Button in the laundry room.**

I am certain that I am not the only renter in the State of Connecticut who has experienced these and other dangerous conditions after an exorbitant increase in rent charges.

For the above reasons I support SB 4.

Rossana Barnaby